

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims reflects all claim amendments and replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Material to be inserted in amended claims is in **bold and underline**, and material to be deleted is in ~~strikeout~~ and (if the deletion is of five or fewer consecutive characters or would be difficult to see) in double brackets [[]]. In brief, claims 1, 2, 4-22, and 25-40 have been canceled, without prejudice, and new claims 41-73 have been added. Applicants reserve their right to pursue the canceled claims in original or amended form at a later time.

Claims 1-40 (Canceled)

41. (New) A method of fusing at least two bones, comprising:

selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface and further including a post extending from the bone-facing surface of the body portion;

placing the bone plate into a cavity formed by at least two bones such that the post restricts movement of the body portion; and

attaching the bone plate to the at least two bones using fasteners.

42. (New) The method of claim 41, further comprising a step of removing a portion of each of the at least two bones to form the cavity.

43. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the step of removing includes a step of forming adjoining first and second cavities, wherein the first cavity is shaped according to the bone-facing surface, and wherein the second cavity is shaped according to the post.

44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the first and second cavities are formed in a single step.

45. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the step of removing includes a step of forming a recess in the at least two bones, wherein the recess is capable of receiving the body portion, wherein the step of placing disposes the post in a region of the cavity adjoining the recess, and wherein the region is formed at least partially by a pre-existing gap between the at least two bones.

46. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a bone-facing surface that is convex, and wherein the step of removing includes forming a cavity at least partially defined by a concave bone surface.

47. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post formed unitarily with the body portion.

48. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post that is a separate component attached to the body portion, and wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing the body portion and the post as a unit into the cavity.

49. (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate having a post disposed in threaded engagement with the body portion.

50. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post substantially centered on the body portion.

51. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface

having a rough texture, and wherein the step of placing positions the rough texture adjacent bone.

52. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface corresponding to a portion of a sphere.

53. (New) The method of claim 52, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface corresponding to less than half of a sphere.

54. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion having a bone-opposing surface and a central region, and wherein the central region defines a blind opening extending into the body portion from the bone-opposing surface.

55. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate defining a central axis and a plurality of openings arranged around the central axis, wherein each of the plurality of openings defines an axis extending obliquely to the central axis, and wherein the step of attaching includes a step of placing bone screws through at least two of the plurality of openings.

56. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a cap configured to be attached to the body portion such that the cap obstructs out-of-bone movement of at least one of the fasteners after the at least one fastener has attached the body portion to bone.

57. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion defining at least one slot configured such that a bone screw can be placed at multiple positions along the slot.

58. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the body portion further includes a perimeter and a bone-opposing surface that opposes the bone-facing surface, and wherein the thickness of the perimeter is greater than the average thickness of the body portion measured between the bone-facing and bone-opposing surfaces.

59. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the bone-facing surface corresponds to a portion of a sphere having a center, and wherein the step of placing restricts pivotal motion of the body portion about a plurality of axes extending through the center.

60. (New) The method of claim 41, the bone plate including a plurality of openings, wherein the step of attaching including a step of placing bone screws through the plurality of openings and into the at least two bones.

61. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the steps of placing and attaching are performed with carpal bones.

62. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion having a width and a height, and wherein the height is substantially less than half the width.

63. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion and a post each having a width, and wherein the width of the post is about one-fifth the width of the body portion.

64. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate having a height, and wherein the post extends from the bone-facing surface by a distance less than the height.

65. (New) A method of fusing at least two bones, comprising:
selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a convex, bone-facing surface and further including a post extending centrally from the bone-facing surface;
removing a portion of at least two bones to form a cavity capable of receiving the body portion and the post;
placing the bone plate into the cavity such that the post restricts movement of the body portion; and
attaching the bone plate to the at least two bones using bone screws.

66. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion with a bone-facing surface corresponding to a portion of a sphere.

67. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein the step of removing includes a step of forming adjoining first and second cavities, wherein the first cavity is shaped according to the bone-facing surface, and wherein the second cavity is shaped according to the post.

68. (New) The method of claim 67, wherein the first and second cavities are formed in a single step.

69. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein the step of removing includes a step of forming a recess in the at least two bones, wherein the recess is capable of receiving the body portion, wherein the step of placing disposes the post in a region of the cavity adjoining the recess, and wherein the region is formed at least partially by a pre-existing gap between the at least two bones.

70. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate in which the post is formed unitarily with the body portion.

71. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein the step of placing including a step of placing the body portion and the post together as a unit into the cavity.

72. (New) A method of fusing at least two bones, comprising:

selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a convex, bone-facing surface that corresponds to a portion of a sphere and further including a post connected to the body portion and extending centrally from the bone-facing surface;

removing a portion of at least two bones of a hand or foot to form a cavity capable of receiving the body portion and the post;

placing the bone plate into the cavity such that the post restricts movement of the body portion; and

attaching the bone plate to the at least two bones using bone screws.

73. (New) The method of claim 72, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate in which the post is formed unitarily with the body portion.